

predominated depended on differences of political environment and of social class. It depended;¹ above all, on the question whether Calvinists were, as at Geneva and in Scotland, a majority, who could stamp their ideals on the social order, or, as in England, a minority, living on the defensive beneath the suspicious eyes of a hostile Government,

In the version of Calvinism which found favour with the English upper classes in the seventeenth century, individualism in social affairs was, on the whole, the prevalent philosophy. It was only the fanatic and the agitator who drew inspiration from the vision of a New Jerusalem descending on England's green and pleasant land, and the troopers of Fairfax soon taught them reason. But, if the theology of Puritanism was that of Calvin, its conception of society, diluted by the practical necessities of a commercial age, and softened to suit the conventions of a territorial aristocracy, was poles apart from that of the master who founded a discipline, compared with which that of Laud, as Laud himself dryly observed," was a thing of shreds and patches. As both the teaching of Calvin himself, and the practice of some Calvinist communities, suggest, the social ethics of the heroic age of Calvinism savoured more of a collectivist dictatorship than of individualism* The expression of a revolt against the mediaeval

ecclesi-
astical system, it stood itself, where
circumstances
favoured it, for a discipline far more
stringent and
comprehensive than that of the Middle
Ages. If, as"
some historians have argued, the philosophy
of *laissez*
faire emerged as a result of the spread of
Calvinism
among the middle classes, it did so, like
tolerance, by
a route which was indirect* It was accepted
less be-
cause it was esteemed for its own sake, than
as a com-
promise forced upon Calvinism at a
comparatively late
stage in its history, as a result of its
modification by
the pressure of commercial interests, or of a
balance of
power between conflicting authorities.